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NARRATIVE

OF AN

Expedition into the Ay Country of West Africa,

AND

THE DISCOVERY

OF

A SYSTEM OF SYLLABIC WRITING

RECENTLY INVENTED BY THE NATIVES
OF THE VY TRIBE.

BY THE REV. S. W. KOELLE,
MISSIONARY AT SIERRA LEONE.

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PREFACE.

It has been frequently asserted that no attempt has been made by the Native Tribes of the Western Coast of Africa to reduce their languages to writing: the only-known method of intercommunication having been by means of the Arabic language, introduced by Mahometan scholars. This fact has been often alleged as a proof of the low intellectual qualities of the natives. Hence, when intelligence reached Sierra Leone of the discovery of a written language in the interior, and of the arrival of a man with a written book, which he was able to read, the whole population was deeply interested in the discovery. The Missionaries hoped that such a language might be the means of introducing the Scriptures, and of throwing a new light upon the philology of West Africa. With these hopes, the Rev. S. W. Koelle,—who is the Tutor in the Fourah Bay Institution, in Sierra Leone, specially charged with the department of Native Languages,—was appointed to visit the country, and to investigate the

facts connected with the recent discovery. This work he accomplished with the utmost readiness, self-devotion, and ability. The result is given in the following Narrative.

The country where the discovery was made, is about three hundred miles east of Sierra Leone, on the western confines of the Republic of Liberia.

It will be seen that the System of Writing is of very recent invention; that it is confined to a single tribe, and language; that it will be scarcely available for Scriptural instruction.

But at the same time, Mr. Koelle's Narrative affords such a proof of intellectual ability and enterprize in the Natives, as well as of a certain degree of moral and religious feeling,—that it holds out bright hopes of the introduction of civilization and Christianity, if under the Divine blessing the right means be applied: and if the awful and degrading evils of the Slave-trade shall be checked.

The Missionaries of the Church Missionary Society are enjoined, and have ever willingly striven, to confine themselves to the great object for which their services are engaged, namely, the conversion of the Heathen to the faith of the Gospel. They have been

sometimes blamed for their abstinence from scientific pursuits, and for the paucity of their discoveries in natural history or general knowledge. But perhaps it has not been sufficiently considered how great a snare and hindrance to missionary work such pursuits may prove, and have proved. The writings of the early Jesuit Missionaries abundantly testify to this danger. The most scientific and intellectual of our Missionaries are the most jealous of any such interruptions to their more noble and sacred employments. Yet, when scientific or literary discoveries fall in their way, they do not omit to notice or improve them, and the Society has ever been ready to give the public the benefit of their information. In the course of a few months two most interesting scientific discoveries in Africa are made known by the Missionaries of this Society: namely, the existence of a mountain covered with perpetual snow, within three degrees of the Equator, upon the East Coast,* and this investigation of the recent invention of a Syllabic System of Orthography.

* A history of this discovery, with a map of the surrounding country, is given in a monthly publication lately established by the Church Missionary Society, of which one portion will consist of recent intelligence received from the Missions of scientific or literary interest.—See No. for May, of "The Church Missionary Intelligencer, a Monthly Journal of Missionary Information." Seeleys, Hatchard, and Nisbet.

The cultivation of the very interesting field of Missionary labour which the Vy country presents, may be most advantageously carried on, as Mr. Koelle suggests, by the Missionary Societies of Liberia. One agent appears to have been already stationed in the district. It will be impossible, however, for a Christian to read this Narrative without feeling a deep interest in the future history of the tribe, and especially of Doalu, the intelligent inventor of the system, and founder of schools for its propagation. May the Lord, of whose infinite love in the redemption of the world, he has lately heard from the lips of our Missionary, lead him into the knowledge of all truth; and cause the light of His Gospel to shine upon and gladden the regions so long oppressed and degraded by the darkness of heathenism, and the horrors of the Slave-trade.

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY,
Sept. 6th, 1849.

NARRATIVE,

&c. &c.

About the middle of January last, Lieutenant Forbes, Commander of H.M.S. Bonetta, came to Mr. Jones at Fourah Bay, in order to inquire, whether the Missionaries of Sierra Leone had ever heard of a *written language* amongst natives, some distance down the coast. He had been ashore near Cape Mount, and observed that the natives had a mode of writing of their own. On inquiring after its origin, he was told, that four men had once brought this art from the interior of Africa. We could not doubt the existence of such a language, as the captain showed us a manuscript written in it.

As no trace of negro writing had ever been discovered, and as, had the statement proved true, that the newly-discovered writing was brought from the interior, we might have had reason to look out for a literary nation in the unknown regions of Africa: —the local Committee here thought the matter of importance, and appointed me to take a journey into the country, and to collect all possible information respecting it. A passage immediately offering itself, I left Freetown on the 27th of January, and arrived at the Sandbeach, near Cape Mount, on the 1st of February. The vessel in which I went was bound to Liberia, and therefore, she went on as soon as I was landed. But the supercargo, a Liberian, had kindly accompanied me ashore, and introduced me to an American trader, a man of colour, who is living on the Sandbeach. As there were no natives living on the Sandbeach, I wanted to go up the country

at once, but the American to whom I had been introduced, told me, that this was quite impracticable, on account of a civil war by which the country was disturbed. Accordingly, I had to avail myself of his offer to stop with him, till it might become possible, to proceed further inland. Glad as I should have been of this offer, in one respect, I could yet not accept it without violating my feelings. For the man is separated from his wife, and lives now with concubines. I must say, however, that he treated me kindly all the time, though I had to tell him that his mode of life was quite contrary to the Word of God. But still circumstances were such, that I had to learn many a lesson of self-denial, quite new to me. My lodging was in a mud house, well smoked by the fires which are used instead of lamps, so that when we had rain, the water which found its way through the thatch, assumed such a colouring quality, that my sheets looked in the morning all but white. Glass windows, or a boarded floor, could not of course be expected; there was such a number of insects, that for the first three nights I could scarcely sleep a little. On account of the war, there was so little provision on the Sandbeach, that my food consisted sometimes for a week of fish and rice in the morning, and rice and fish in the evening. Once my landlord told me, that the rice I had got in the morning was the last he had in his house. There was at last so little eatables, that the vast number of rats began to eat the hair off my head when I was in bed. I, of course soon awoke, and took good care for the future not to become a prey to the rats.

The time I was detained on the Sandbeach I employed in making myself acquainted with the Vei* language, which afterwards assisted me much, better to understand their mode of writing. For this purpose I had to hire a man from one of

* The name has usually been spelt Vy. According to the orthography now generally adopted, it would be spelt Vai; but in the Narrative Mr. Koelle's orthography has been preserved. Mr. Koelle is a native of Germany.

the neighbouring towns who understood some English. The Vei language belongs to a family of languages which seems to be spoken on a very extensive area. The Bambara, which is spoken on the Niger, near Timbuctu, the Pase and Kando, which are spoken near Liberia, and the Mandingo, are likewise members of this family. And future philological researches will, no doubt, find out other sister languages which are still buried in obscurity. A large number of languages seems to be spoken along the western coast of Africa, and some of them are not yet known, even by their name. The Vei language is very simple, harmonious, with scarcely any grammatical inflexions, rich in vowels, and with only a few combinations of consonants which at first appear hard to a European.

A fortnight after my arrival on the Sandbeach, one of the contending parties came there and took possession of it. I was now in the power of the chief who, however, was friendly towards the English. As I had learnt, that the inventor of the Vei writing was living in their territory, I at once asked permission of the chief to let me proceed thither. But he denied it, saying, "You are now in my power; if I let you go, and you are killed up in the country, the English will come and require your blood from my hands. Wait, till we have driven our enemies out of the country, and then you may go up and stop as long as you please." So I was to be content, to stop longer on the sea-shore. The war-men had encamped only a hundred yards from the house in which I lived, so that their drumming and crying were night and day ringing in my ears. Their war-palavers, and their shocking war-dances, they frequently held right before my windows, and I had to witness them, whether I would or not. Almost daily they had some fighting in the forest which was close to us, and we could not say which party was going to be victorious. Once, the party favouring slave-trade came very near to us, both by water and by land; but they were successfully resisted, and at last driven back by the other party.

From what I saw and heard, I found that the natives are

by no means courageous, but rather cowardly. But in proportion to their cowardliness, in open fighting, they are cruel when once they have it in their power. When the party friendly to us had taken, as a prisoner, one of the murderers of their late chief, they proposed to compel him to beat rice for three weeks, day and night, without a moment's respite, and without receiving a drop of water to assuage his thirst. Had he sunk under his task, they intended to scalp him alive. Once, whilst I was sitting in my room, I heard somebody say in the yard, "They are cutting off his hands." As soon as I heard this, I went out to see what was the matter; and when I came, I found a troop of war-men at the neighbouring river, with a boy of about seventeen years, quite unclothed, in their midst. The chief not being amongst them, I went to the stockade, and there met him in the act of sharpening his sword. On my question, what he was doing? he said: "I am whetting my knife, to cut off the hands of a Tuso boy, whom they have caught in the bush, just now; and then I will put a chain round his neck and send him back to Tuso: why did they kill my brother. The unfortunate boy was said to be a relative of one of the late chief's murderers, and this was thought sufficient ground to mutilate him. I interceded for the poor youth, but without effect, at first. The chief seemed to be resolved to perpetrate the cruel act. But I did not go from his side for a whole hour, begging him, and making all possible remonstrances, till at last he gave me the promise to desist from his bloody purpose. The youth was brought back from the river into the stockade, with his arms tied behind his back. Then he was set into the burning sun, without hat, or any article of clothes, was besmeared all over with tar, and had a heavy chain locked round his neck. Perceiving that he suffered from thirst, I wanted to give him some water; but when the king's head woman saw it, she commanded me to put the water down again. I, however, did not feel disposed to obey her, but gave him the water, which he at once swallowed. Then I went to the queen, and said to her, "If I should ever see your children

in such a situation, I would also give them water to drink;" and this seemed fully to satisfy her. On the day following, the youth was sent up the country to the capital; but I heard afterwards, that when the old mother of the late chief heard that he was a relative of the murderers of her son, she seized a cutlass and miserably massacred him in the street.

The war itself is connected with the slave-trade, and, therefore, I will tell how it arose. The men-of-war try to make treaties with the Native chiefs, that they should have nothing more to do with foreign slave-trade. They succeeded, some years ago, in concluding such a treaty with the Vei king, who has faithfully kept this treaty. But now a party formed themselves, who wanted to carry on slave-trade, yet, at first, without openly resisting the opposite party. So matters stood till just a twelvemonth ago. At that time, the king wanted to to go down to the Sandbeach, but when passing through Tuso, and shaking hands with some of the people, some men of the party opposed to him, rushed forth and assassinated him, whilst he was sitting in his hammock. His son also, who had accompanied him, was likewise murdered upon the spot. This bloody deed brought about an open rupture; the previous suspicion and dissension became a determined hostility; a civil war broke out which lasted till after my departure. Whilst I was still there, the Queen of England sent presents to those Vei chiefs who acted according to their treaty; but they firmly determined not to *touch* them, before the English men-of-war had assisted them in driving the other party out of the country. The brother and successor of the murdered chief said to the Captains of some men-of-war: "You came to our country, and required of us to have nothing more to do with slave-trade. We promised it, and still desire to keep to our promise. But the other party are determined to bring the slave-trade back again to our country, and only because my brother prevented them from doing so, they murdered him. Therefore, we consider it your duty, to help us in driving altogether out from our country those who want to bring the

slave-trade back to it again. They can go to the Gallinas people, but *we* will no longer have slave-trade in our country." On the day before my departure from Vei, the men-of-war assisted the natives in an attack on the slave-trade party, but met with a much stronger resistance than they expected. Several Europeans were wounded, and I was afterwards told, that the men-of-war had twice more to lend their assistance to the Natives, before they succeeded so far as was considered necessary.

When, in the progress of the war, the town of Tuso was besieged, which had been obstructing the road from the Sandbeach to the upper part of the country, I again made an attempt to get permission from the Chief, to let me go up to Bandakoro, where the inventor of the Vei mode of writing was said to reside. After some hesitation, he told me that in the evening he would send up a canoe which has to fetch provisions, and that I could go in it. These were glad tidings to me, for I had now been detained on the Sandbeach for nearly four weeks. At five o'clock I left, on the same day, together with a wounded soldier, and two boys who had to pull the canoe. One of the boys was the king's son, who was sent to procure me lodging, and to tell the king's wives in Bandakoro that they would have to cook for me. The canoe in which we went was so small, that every one had to sit right down on its bottom, and not to stand up again, because these small canoes are so liable to upsetting. Soon after we had left the Sandbeach, we heard the firing of guns, which terrified my companions not a little. But when we came near to Tuso, and heard from the besiegers, that all the Tuso people were still kept in good custody, they gained confidence again. We passed Tuso about seven o'clock in the evening, and arrived at Datia, another Vei town, at nine o'clock. On my return from Bandakoro, when I again passed Tuso, it was no longer a town, but a heap of ashes. For when the few days' siege had been given up, the Tuso people put their goods into canoes, and after having entirely burnt down their towns, went across to the opposite shore of the river, to join the other

friends of slave-trade, who were the predominating party there.

When I arrived at Datia, I was first observed by some sentinels without the town, and after having told them my friendly intentions, they opened the gates of the well fortified town. Having entered, I was led through exceedingly narrow lanes, which brought me to a small hut in which I was to spend the night. At first I stood there in profound darkness; but after a while, a woman came in and lighted a fire upon the floor, which had to serve instead of a lamp. Soon the house was filled with curious spectators, who asked me a multitude of uncalled for questions. The air became so close and hot, that it was almost insupportable. At half-past ten o'clock I politely begged my visitors to retire, and to let me take some rest. But I had to repeat my request several times, before it was attended to. When they had gone, I told my servant, with a special emphasis, to shut the door well; for which I had sufficient reason. But how was I surprised to hear his reply, "Sir, there is no door!" At first, I did not know what to do, but after looking about, we discovered a ragged mat, which we suspended before the opening of the door, and then, commending ourselves to the protection of our Heavenly Father, we laid ourselves down to rest;—I upon an old bedstead of native manufacture, the only article of comfort in the house—and my servant upon the ground, by my side. God heard our prayers; we lay down in peace, and awoke again in safety. After morning prayer I went out in order to get a sight of the place, whilst my landlady, was preparing some breakfast for me.

The town of Datia is well fortified, according to native ideas, and even some officers of English men-of-war told me afterwards, that a town, thus fortified, could not easily be taken with guns. A light wooden fence, about twenty feet high, is the outermost part of the fortification of Datia. Between it and the properly protecting stockade, there is a walk all around the circular town of about three or four feet in

breadth. The proper stockade consists of pieces of wood, half a foot or a foot in diameter, which are rammed into the ground so closely together, that each touches the other. Generally only one, but sometimes two, three, and more such pieces of wood, form the thickness of the stockade. Above these sticks, which are about twelve or fifteen feet high, there is again a regular fence of the same height, but consisting of much thinner sticks. On the other side of this stockade, towards the town, there is a girdle, fully four feet broad, and consisting of sharp-pointed sticks three feet long, which are rammed into the ground with their points upwards, all around the town, like a trackle of wood. This girdle of pointed sticks will almost render it impossible for any body to climb up the stockade, and leap over it into the town. The houses are not built quite close to the stockade, but a narrow path leads between them all around the town. There are generally more than one, *viz.*, about three or four gates leading into the town. The gates themselves are rather narrow but strong, and locked every evening in time of war, either with a common lock, not of native manufacture, or with a big piece of wood leaned against it, or with both together. All the other Vei towns which I have seen were fortified in the same way, like Datia, or in a very similar one. When I expressed my surprise to the people that they built their houses so close together—for they are so cramped that you can scarcely move between them, and that the dust and heat become almost intolerable for a European—they told me, that this is on account of the war. Before the war many had their houses scattered in the bush, but when the war came, they all removed their houses into the stockade, which thereby became quite crowded.

I had sufficient time to view the town before breakfast, for in the Vei country the cooks are not so quick as in the hotels of Europe. It was past eight o'clock, when my fried fowl was ready, and so I could only leave between eight and nine o'clock, though I had intended to be off at day-break. In my journey higher up the Bisuma I was exposed to some danger, owing to

the small size of our canoe, and the carelessness of the canoe-men. The canoe was so small, that we had to sit right down on its bottom, in order to affect its equilibrium as little as possible with the motion of our bodies. Once it turned so much on one side, that it was half filled with water; and scarcely had I become aware of it, when the Natives were all of them already in the water, and I alone in the canoe. Happily we were just then in a shallow part of the river, and the evil could easily be remedied. But one of the king's wives, a fellow-passenger of mine, became so much frightened by this, that she tried to wade ashore, and only after some while, when finding it impracticable, came back to us again. After this the canoe-men showed a little more concern about their canoe, and we arrived safely at Da, about half an hour after noon.

The town of Da lies on the opposite side of the river, with reference to the situation of Tuso and Datia, but its inhabitants belong to the party opposed to slave-trade. Against my wish the canoe-men pulled ashore here, and after having landed, told me that at Da they had to load their canoe with provisions for the war men, and that I, therefore, must look out for another canoe and other men to take me to Bandakoro. This was not good news to me, but I could not help it; and, therefore, immediately applied to the king for a canoe and men. The king was very friendly at first, and invited me to come to his house, and to have a fowl cooked for me. "You cannot proceed now," said he, "the sun is too hot for you; wait till the evening." But I had already had some experience of what it is to be in the power of an African king, and therefore had no inclination to be again so circumstanced, if I could help it. I expressed my determination to proceed, on account of my unacquaintance with the way; and glad I was, afterwards, that I had done so. The king charged me two shillings for a canoe and men to take me to Bandakoro. I immediately gave them to him, and expected to leave at once. But after having waited a little while, and seeing that no preparation for the departure was made, I inquired of the king the reason of it. He replied,

"I cannot send you to Bandakoro for two shillings, you must give me two bars of tobacco," which are equal in value to two shillings. So I did; for I had provided myself with some tobacco. Now, after having again waited for about half an hour, and seeing that they did not move a hand towards leaving, I put my luggage back into the canoe in which I had come, and drew the canoe into the water, with the intention to go higher up the river, with my servant alone. When the king saw that I was in earnest, he ordered his men to bring my things ashore again, and to carry the canoe away, and I could do nothing to stop him. Then I spoke earnestly to the king again, requesting him to send me off. At last he said, "Well, I will send you, but you must give four bars of tobacco; two for myself, and two for the canoe-men. Having only five bars about me, I did not like to part with four, before I reached Bandakoro; so I begged him to accept two bars of tobacco and two shillings, which he at length did. This unpleasant, but unavoidable palaver, took place on the landing-place of Da, amidst the burning rays of the sun in his strength, from half-past twelve till two o'clock, P.M. Travelling in Africa is a very trying thing, and requires a good deal of patience.

The Bisuma river might be more properly called a lake. Its water is quite stagnant, and its breadth about eight or nine miles. Originally, however, it must have been the lower course of the Ma river, which can only with difficulty have found its way through extensive masses of sand into the sea, and has, therefore, no doubt, formed swamps thereabout for a long time. At last, the sea broke through the masses of sand, and covered the low land, through which the Ma was winding its way as far up as Da. This will account for the saltness of the water in the Bisuma, and for the fact, that at Da the river at once narrows into a breadth of only about fifteen yards. Its banks do not consist of rocks, but of a low swampy soil, covered with mangroves. This small river bears the name of Ma; but the name of Bisuma is applied to the water from Da right down to the Sandbeach.

After having pulled up the quiet, black-looking, almost motionless Ma, for about two miles, we had to land and to pursue our way to Bandakoro on foot. A few hundred yards from the river I saw the place where once Dshoni stood, the native place of Doalu Bukara's grandmother. Now, only a few huts are left. Here the travelling difficulties began afresh. The carriers took my luggage on their heads and ran on with it, so that soon they were out of sight, in the thousand different windings which the path makes through the forest. This is the way they carry their load: they run on with it some distance; then they put it on the ground, and sit down a while at its side; and when they have rested they take it up again. I was, therefore, not afraid of their running away, but expected soon to find them seated under a tree. So it was; but now they began to trouble me, saying that they could not go any further, that Bandakoro was too far, &c. At first I assumed a commanding air, and thus succeeded in getting them to resume their burden; but afterwards, when I saw the real difficulties of the way, I tried to persuade them, chiefly with kindness, to go on. Several times I met them on the road, having put down my luggage some distance further on, on their return home, as they said. But good words, accompanied by a small piece of silver, or a larger one of an English biscuit, always reconciled them to the thought of proceeding somewhat further. And, really, their work was not a very easy one. The man who carried my portmanteau on his head, had several times to proceed on his knees for some distance, on account of the over hanging branches of the trees; which, however, also formed a beautiful umbrella over the narrow path, so that we could walk in the coolness and darkness of shade, almost in the middle of the day. Once we had to cross a swamp, of about five or ten minutes in breadth, on pieces of wood, sometimes scarcely thicker than a man's arm, which were suspended on forked boughs, on which we had to hold ourselves, in order not to fall down into the mire. Though we had not much time to look about on the swamp, because

we had to take heed to our steps, yet my eyes were sometimes almost irresistibly drawn on the number of chaste Lotus flowers which had spread their beautifully white robes over the water of this solitary swamp.

At last, after a walk of four or five miles, we emerged from the thicket of the forest; and before our eyes stood a moderate hill, with the crown of a stockade on its head, and beautifully illuminated by the mild rays of the setting sun. It was a most agreeably surprising sight, to see such a pleasant spot, in the midst of a wilderness. Our paces were quickened, especially when we saw some persons come forth from the gate, and apparently waiting for us before the town. They were two men: the one with features of mildness and benevolence expressed on his face; the other, not quite so advantageously distinguished. "What news?" was at once the question put to me, under a hearty shaking of hands, and with the explanation, that thus to ask at meeting was the custom of the country. The question next to this was, "Now tell us, what has brought thee to this country?" Having replied to this, I said, "I want to see a certain Doalu Bukara; can you not tell me where he lives?" Then the man with whom I spoke laughed heartily, and said, "You want to see Doalu? that is myself, who am now with you speaking." I was not less rejoiced than he himself at this, which seemed at once to promise me success for my mission; for hitherto I entertained some fears, the people should refuse giving me sufficient explanation of their country books. As soon as they heard that my intention was to stop with them some days, they said, "Then come with us, and we will show you where to dwell, till you go back again." Then I followed them to a neat new hut, belonging to Kali Bara, Doalu's companion, which I occupied during my whole stay in Bandakoro. A short while after, Doalu went and brought some more men to introduce them to me. Then he said, "We are now prepared to hear more on the object of your coming amongst us." But I had to beg them to wait for the next day, for I was quite exhausted from the troubles of the journey, having had nothing to eat since morning.

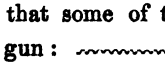
Next morning they early came, and reminded me of my promise, upon which I told them that I had heard of some men here who have written their own language, but that their books were now old, and so I came to bring them new paper, on which they might copy them, and then let me have the old books, that I might show them to my friends in the Poro country, (very likely originally equal to *Portu*guese country, but now to "white man's country" in general) who were also great friends of the black people. They were pleased with this, and at once my landlord began to copy his book. I, however, had to finish it, and Doalu Bukara afterwards said to me, "White people can write better than black people; you must copy my book for me. I gladly accepted the offer; but was not able to write with so little apparatus as they. They sit upon a low bench, and then their knees serve them as a writing-desk. When I asked them for a table, they informed me there was not one in the whole village. I, therefore, put my two trunks one upon the other, and so got a writing-desk, which, perhaps, was not much more convenient than theirs. But an old European camp-stool, the only one in the town, was afterwards brought me for use. This shows that the number of their commodities is very limited. As to their writing-materials, Doalu told me, that they do not write with "bird's hair," like us, but with pens of reed, and that they make their ink from leaves in the bush, which they call ink-leaves.

The nature of the Vei writing plainly shows its entire independence of both the Arabic and the Latin. To prove this, I refer not so much to the shape of the letters, though this also shows it at first sight, as rather to the fact, that the Vei is a *syllabic* mode of writing, whereas the Arabic and Latin are alphabetic. Each syllable has in the Vei writing only one simple sign for its representation. It seems, therefore, to be of the same kind as that still used in Japan. An alphabetic mode of writing, which, I believe, was also in all instances originally a strict phonetic one, is the most developed mode of representing thoughts to the eye. Such a system presupposes some gram-

matical knowledge, and an ear already exercised to a certain degree. And this cannot be expected of a people when making the very first attempt in writing. The syllabic character, therefore, of the Vei writing speaks much in favour of its *natural* formation. In this point of view it was very interesting to me, in a very learned work, in Alex. Von Humboldt's "Kosmos," to find the assertion, that the primitive Phœnician mode of writing (that from which all our European alphabets developed themselves), was likewise a syllabic one.

The simple distinct signs of the independent and quite original Vei mode of writing are given in the accompanying Table. They are arranged in an alphabetical order, and their sound marked in English letters, with Italian value of the vowels:

This Table shows that, in all, 215 different syllables are provided for with a sign for their visible representation, and that one and the same letter can assume a different situation, or undergo a slight modification, without altering its power. The few cases in which the same sign stands for different sounds, arise more from peculiarities of the Vei language itself, than from orthographical inaccuracy. The writing is performed from the left hand to the right, and shows also in this respect its independence of the Arabic. Yet from the nature of the characters, they can also be written and joined in an opposite direction, and a few men I saw do so; but Doalu himself, and the majority of the people write in the same direction as ourselves. It will be seen from the manuscripts, that the simple letters are not connected with each other, as in English, but loosely joined, as in Hebrew, and also, that no interpunctuation is used; that the words are not separated from each other, but character joined to character, in a "serie continuâ," just like in the ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. The mode of writing, therefore, is very undeveloped, and it is to be considered as fortunate, in a certain sense, that it is not too extensively known; so that a better system of orthography may at once be introduced, without much difficulty, together with the introduction of

Christianity. It would be really a pity to make use of such an unweildy and inaccurate orthography, in case books should be translated into the Vei language. Nevertheless, it does much credit to the people, as a first attempt at writing. And as an illustration to what a degree of accuracy it is carried, I can state, that once in translating a manuscript, I could not get the assistance of a man who could read, and therefore had to take one who could not. To him I read from the manuscript, and he translated it into English. Afterwards, when I was again assisted by a reading man, I translated the same piece over again, and found, when comparing both the translations, that upon the whole they agreed. From the circumstance that the Vei language contains a great number of monosyllabic words, it arises, that most of the simple signs used in writing have each a distinct meaning of its own. But this is quite arbitrary, and the signs remain really *phonetic* signs. The few simple signs for polysyllabic proper names, generally legible only to the writer, are of no consequence in deciding such a general question as the character of the whole mode of writing. There is, therefore, also no connexion, as has been supposed, between the Chinese and the Vei writings. It is indeed probable, that some of the signs had a symbolic origin, *e. g.* *bu*, gun:  *dshi*, water; *dshon*, slave; *gba*, money; but even these are used in a phonetic capacity as frequently as the others. It would be, therefore, as much, or more, unjust and incorrect to call the Vei writing a symbolic one, as it would be to call the Shemitic writing so, though the symbolic origin of the latter is almost indubitable.

Having thus considered the nature of the Vie writing, let us now review its origin and its history. Doalu Bukara, now about forty years old, and living in Bandakoro, is the proper inventor of it; he was, however, assisted by five of his friends. The first impulse to attempt it, he received in a dream, which he narrated to me in the following way. He said: About fifteen years ago, I had a dream, in which a tall, venerable looking white man appeared to me, saying, "I am sent to

you by other white men." Doalu asked, "What is the object for which you are sent to me?" The white man replied: "I bring you a book." Doalu said, "This is very good; but tell me now, what is the nature of this book." The white messenger answered: "I am sent to bring this book to you, in order that you bring it to the rest of the people. But I must tell you, that neither you, nor any one who will become acquainted with the book, are allowed to eat the flesh of dogs and monkeys, nor of any thing found dead, whose throat was not cut; and to touch the book on those days on which you have touched the fruit of the To-tree (a kind of very sharp pepper)." The messenger then showed Doalu his book, and taught him, to write any Vei words in the same way, in which the book was written. This made a deep impression on Doalu's mind, and he described it to me quite graphically. He said: "Look, this sign (writing the sign with his finger on the ground) Doalu, means i (English e). Then he wrote close to it another sign, saying, and this means, na. Now, Doalu, read both together!" Doalu did so, and was quite delighted, to have learnt to read the word ina, *i. e.* come here! In the same way the messenger showed him how a great number of other words can be written. At last Doalu asked his instructor concerning the contents of the book he had brought. But the answer was: "Wait a little; I shall tell you by and by." After this Doalu awoke, but, as he told me in a sorrowful tone, was never afterwards told what was written in the book. In the morning he called his friends together, in order to tell them his dream, viz. his brother Dshara Barakora, and his cousins, Dshara Kali, Kali Bara, Fa Gbasi, and So Tabaku, all of whom are still alive, with the exception of So Tabaku who died about three years ago. They were all exceedingly pleased with the dream, and quite sure, that it contained a divine revelation. A few days after, Kali Bara also, as he himself told me, had a dream, the reality of which, however, I doubt very much, in which a white man told him that the book came from God, and that they must mind it well.

Perhaps it will not be amiss to state here what, in my opinion, will account for Doalu Bukara's dream. Doalu Bukara is a thinking man; and what once occupies his mind seems to occupy it altogether and constantly; all his thoughts and energies seem to be concentrated on such a subject. Now there was once a white Missionary in the country, with whom Doalu learnt to read for about three months till the Missionary's departure. This, in some measure, awakened his desire for learning. He could still repeat some verses from the English Bible, which he had learnt from that Missionary. Afterwards he was employed as a servant by slave-traders and common traders on the coast. They often sent him on an errand to distant places, from which he had generally to bring letters back to his masters. In these letters his master was sometimes informed when Doalu had done any mischief in the place to which he had been sent. Now this struck his mind very much. He said to himself: "How is this, that my master knows every thing which I have done in a distant place! He only wants to look into the book, and this tells him all. Such a thing we ought also to have, by which we could speak with each other, though separated by a large space of land." The want of a mode of writing seems to have been felt more generally. This I conclude from a passage in Kali Bara's book, in which he speaks of the time, when the new art was invented. He says: "At that time began my father Doalu Worogbe to like books. And the people said: The Poros (Portuguese, Europeans in general) have long heads. Nobody has such a long head as the Poros. But some of our people did not believe this. Then said Doalu (Worogbe): Why do you say what I maintain is a lie? Can any Vei man write a letter and send it to his friend, and could he read it?" But especially Doalu Bukara's mind was entirely wrapped up in the ardent desire to be able to read and write; this subject engaged his thoughts by day and by night. This appears to me the natural basis on which Doalu Bukara's dream can be easily comprehended.

Though Doalu had been well instructed in his dream, yet,

as he told me, in the morning he could not remember the signs which had been shown him by night. Therefore—these are his own words—he and his friends had to put their heads together, in order to make new ones. And on this ground we are fully justified in speaking of a real *invention* of the Vei mode of writing.

But all of these six men were then still young, being all from twenty to thirty years of age. They were therefore afraid, people might not pay them proper attention. So they agreed to take 100 salt sticks, *i. e.* 100 parcels of salt, as big as an arm, and three or four feet long, and to bring them to king Fa Toro, or Goturu, in Tianimani, in order to make him favourably disposed to their object. Their present had the desired effect. The king declared himself exceedingly pleased with their discovery, which, as he said, would soon raise his people upon a level with the Poros and Mandingos, who hitherto had been the only book-people. He expressed the surprising opinion, that this was most likely the book, of which the Mandingos (who are Muhammadans) say, that it is with God in heaven, and will one day be sent down upon earth. He requested them to teach this new art in Dshondu, where they resided, and to make known his will, that all his subjects should be instructed by them. Accordingly, they erected a large house in Dshondu, provided it with benches and wooden tablets, instead of slates, for the scholars, and then kept a regular day-school; in which not only boys and girls, but also men, and even some women learnt to write and read their own language. So they went on prosperously for about eighteenth months, and even people from other towns came to Dshondu, to make themselves acquainted with this "new book." But a war broke out with the Guras, in which Dshondu was taken by surprise, and given over to the flames, with all the goods and books it contained. The destruction of Dshondu forms a crisis for the worse in the history of the Vei writing. By it the literary zeal of the people was so much checked, that they have never since had regular schools again,

After the destruction of Dshondu, the book-men, *i. e.* people who can read and write, were scattered throughout the country, and it was only about five years ago that many of them collected together and built a new town, some miles distant from the place where Dshondu stood. The name of this new town is Bandakoro, literally, *cotton-tree ground*, from the abundance of cotton trees which are growing thereabouts. But there is now an additional reason for calling the town Bandakoro; for its stockade consists entirely of cotton-tree sticks which are growing well, so that in a little time they will form an impenetrable wall of cotton trees round the town. At the present time it would appear, from what I have witnessed in the Vei country, that in Bandakoro all grown up people of the male sex are more or less able to read and to write, and that in all other Vei towns there are at least some men who can likewise spell their "country-book."

Doalu Bukara is a very interesting man, and is distinguished from his country people, not merely by a greater intelligence, but by an altogether nobler spirit. The Vei people, in general, I must call a very sensual and carnal people, the females especially unchaste and shameless. They live without God, and without hope in this world. Idols they have none; and to the God who is a spirit, they cannot elevate their carnal thoughts. I saw no mode of worship among them, except the Muhammadan. And, as if Muhammadanism were too spiritual for them, not one fourth of the population are professed followers of the false prophet. But all the professed Muhammadans, I saw, drink wine and spirits whenever they can get them; they also take as many women as they can afford to buy. All those who are not Muhammadans are real heathen, a godless people, a people with no other god, than their belly. No wonder that such a people have gone the common way from atheism to superstition, and that they are now slaves to a childish fear of evil spirits and witches, so that you may see them often carry about on their bodies actual loads of Greegrees to guard against their influence. Amongst

such a people, to meet with a man, like Doalu Bukari, is an indescribable pleasure to a Missionary. I always felt very happy in his company, and he also felt attached to me: so that once, when he was called to another town, he told me on his return: "My heart did not lie down the whole day, because I could not be with you; but now it has lain down again."

Doalu is an open, upright, and honest man. His modesty and humility surprised me the more, as these are virtues of very rare occurrence among the Negro race. He is grateful for kindness received, and can value disinterested motives. When I was lying sick of the fever in Bandakoro, he said to me on one of his visits: "My heart troubles me much, because you have come amongst us, not in order to trade or to make any gain, but merely to tell us the true road to life; and now you have also to suffer sickness for our sakes. But never mind, God will soon make you well again." His mind appears to be frequently engaged with high and divine things. In our walks which we took together, and in which he had often to walk behind me, from the narrowness of the paths, I not unfrequently heard him exclaim, with deep emotion, words like these: Ever—lasting! God Almighty! Jesus Christ! Alakabaru! He seems to be really concerned about his soul's salvation, and earnestly seeking to secure it. In a conversation I had with him, he once said to me: "My heart seeks after God. Once I thought to find God in our book-palaver, but it was not so. Afterwards, I believed that I could find God in Muhammadanism, and have now been praying after the Mandingo fashion these seven years; but my heart has again not found God. Now if you can help me, that I really find God, I shall be very thankful for it." I was, of course, delighted, to point out to him the new and living way which leads into the very heart of God. He was very attentive to, and much pleased with what I said to him on this subject. On the day after this conversation, he came again, and asked me in a very serious manner, whether it was really my full conviction, that the Muhammadan road leads to fire,

and only the Christian road to heaven. I now told him my whole mind about Muhammadanism, and he was so much impressed with what I said, that he promised to give up the repetition of his unintelligible Arabic prayers, and to pray henceforward to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In order to ascertain, as I conceive, whether I should be able to refute the objections of his Muhammadan guide, he introduced this Malam to me. Immediately after the introduction, I said to the Malam, that I was sorry to see him walk on a road which cannot lead to heaven. He returned the same compliment to me. Therefore, I showed him, in a long conversation, that he neither knew my road, nor had a thorough acquaintance with his own: and that, consequently, he had no reason to pity me. At length he could gainsay no longer, but ran away, the by-standing people saying: "This time palaver catch him." Even Doalu appeared to be pleased with the defeat of his master. Before I left the country, I offered Doalu Bukara, to take him with me to Sierra Leone, in order to instruct him more fully in the Christian religion. But he declined the offer, on the ground, that there was then war in the country; for, said he, if I would go now, the people would say on my return—He left us while we had war in the country; so he must now pay a large sum of money.

If the question be asked, whether a Mission ought not to be begun in the Vei country, my opinion is, of course, in the affirmative; because *all* Heathen tribes must yet hear the blessed sound of the Gospel. But I cannot undertake to say that the Vei people are *more* prepared for a Mission amongst them, than other tribes. They are not more prepared in a moral and spiritual point of view; though they promised to send their boys and girls to school, and to give them entirely up to me, in case I should stop amongst them; and though they behaved very civilly to myself, and to an American Episcopal-Methodist Schoolmaster, who had conducted a school there six months before my arrival;

and who returned to the place, when the war was sufficiently settled. I drew the attention of this Schoolmaster on Doalu Bukara, and hope that he will catch him in the Gospel net. As regards intelligence, I was told by a native trader in Liberia, who is well acquainted with a number of African tribes, and who once lived for eight years in the Vei country, that the tribes in the interior are more intelligent than all the tribes on the coast, the Vei tribe not excepted. He attributed this circumstance to the long-continued degrading influence of slave-trade upon the tribes near the coast. Besides this, the Vei tribes is by no means a very extensive tribe. I do not think, that it amounts to 50,000 souls altogether. The constant intercourse also which the Vei people keep up with Liberia, where American Missionary Societies are carrying on a prosperous work, seems to show that it would be most natural for these Societies to extend their operations to the Vei country, as they have also already done, by sending a Schoolmaster there.

Perhaps it will not be uninteresting to add some general information respecting the Vei people. Regarding their origin, I heard from the mouth of one of them that, "Kia Tamba and Fabula, children of one womb, came with an army from the Mandingo country, and took in succession Kroo, Basa, Maba, Durukoro, (the present Liberia,) Moro, (the country round Little Cape Mount), Wakoro (grand Cape Mount,) and settled round the latter place, in what is now called Vei country. This historical account gains some confirmation from philology, which shows that the Vei and Mandingo are really sister languages. Philology is further able to determine, from the *degree* of relationship between these two languages, at least as far as the *Lexicon* is concerned, (a grammatical comparison I could not make, not having a Mandingo Grammar,) that this emigration must have taken place a long time, at any rate some centuries ago. It also appears that when this emigration took place, Muhammadanism had not yet any, or if any a very slight influence amongst the Mandingoes, at least the emigrating

part of them; for the Vei language contains but a very limited number of Arabic words, and these are generally unknown to the bulk of the people, so that it becomes more than probable that they are owing to the modern influence of Muhammadanism through its Missionaries. It is surprising, however, that the rite of circumcision, is generally practised. But they do not appear, to connect any religious ideas with it.

Polygamy is a source of much domestic and moral evil in the Vei country. A man takes as many wives as he can buy, and in the bargain the will of the girl is but little regarded. This was the case with my landlord in Bandakoro, when he took his head-wife, and who does not yet appear to be very happy in his company. He tells us the case himself in his book, speaking of himself in the third person: "At that time he spoke friendlily to Sedianyai with a white cloth, in the war time. But the woman said, she did not like him. Momoru Fangakondo (her brother), however, liked me, and said that I was a good man; therefore I got the woman." The king told me, that he has 60 wives; but with what strong and tender bands he must be tied to them you may judge from the fact, that, during my residence in the country, he gave one of them to a warrior, as an acknowledgment for his bravery in an engagement! One thing struck me, however, viz., that they seem to connect the idea of unholiness with that of marriage; and that, notwithstanding custom has sanctioned polygamy, they are yet under some sense of guilt because of it. For once, among other questions which were put to me, I was asked "whether I ever had a wife?" and when I answered in the negative, they were almost besides themselves from astonishment, and exclaimed, "Truely he is a god-man." And another time, a Vei man said, "There are no bad things in my country except one, namely, that a man has many wives, whereas God made only one woman for one man."

As regards the occupations of the people, the freemen generally attend to their trade, and look after the slaves and women who work the farms. In case a serious dispute,

or any thing concerning the whole town or country should arise, they assemble to deliberate on it. I witnessed many such assemblies. They sit on mats or dried hides in a circle upon the ground. The head-man of the town generally begins with holding a speech, whilst walking to and fro in the circle. In speaking, almost after every sentence, he calls the attention of his hearers, by saying, hear! hear! And they constantly express their approbation of what he says by signs and sounds. After the head-man, any one of his hearers can get up and address the others in the same way. So they decide on questions of general interest in an open assembly, according to the public opinion. On such occasions I sometimes heard flowing and animated speeches delivered of fifteen minutes, and half an hour's duration, and accompanied by a natural and not at all immoderate gesticulation. A chief branch of the women's occupation is the preparation of salt from the sea-water, on the Sandbeach. I was told, that the wealth of a man is estimated by the number of wives he can have on the Sandbeach to prepare salt. Salt is the chief article of trade with the tribes in the interior. Slaves, laden with salt, are sent thither, and bring in return cattle and ivory. The men then exchange the latter again for European articles of trade, especially rum, powder, and tobacco. The clothing of the men is on the whole more decent than that of the women; the former consisting of short-legged trowsers, and a large piece of cloth hanging down from the shoulders and covering pretty well the whole body, from the neck down to the knees, or a sort of shirt; instead of this cloth, the women have only a cloth round the loins. Their food appears to be simple, consisting chiefly of rice, cassadas, and fish, and sometimes, especially in the rainy season, some venison, *e. g.*, of deer, of which they have several kinds in the bush. Palm-oil they use instead of butter or lard; and if they always take as large a quantity of it as my landlady in Bandakoro, who nearly made the fowl to swim in it, their meals must be very rich, according to their notions. Milk, which they call breast-water, they do not use;

for though they have fine goats, yet do they not milk them. Their cows give no milk, for the tribes in the interior from whom they get them, prevent the Vei people from raising cattle; and so secure to themselves the continuance of their trade in cattle.

To return to Bandakoro, I spent my time there in transcribing and translating Vei manuscripts, and in speaking to the people on the one way that leads to everlasting life. But I had not been thus engaged for more than a week, when I was seized by a violent attack of fever. The swamps which are spread around the foot of the hill on which Bandakoro is situated, the great heat and closeness of the air, for we felt no effects of the sea-breezes there, together with overexertion, seem to have been the causes of this fever. My fever increased, till I had already slight attacks of delirium, but then a strong dose of medicine broke its power. Such a sickness, under such circumstances, is well calculated to make one feel one's entire nothingness and helplessness;—but also to let one experience, in the sweetest manner, the all-sufficiency of God's grace for our manifold wants. How much the ordinary sufferings are increased by circumstances which are not fit to be described, I will not attempt to illustrate; but only praise the mercy of the Lord, who kept all apprehensions far from me, and gave me a cheerful resignation in His will, and a full assurance of an everlasting life with Him, after this present. Truly, if the Lord is but our portion, we shall be able to part with everything in this world, with life itself, and yet feel rich, unspeakably rich and happy.

Having proceeded so far with my work, before I was seized by fever, that I could do the rest on the Sandbeach, I left for this much healthier place early in the morning, after the first day on which I had been quite free from fever. Doalu Bukara provided carriers for me, to bring me to the landing-place of the river Ma, where we expected a canoe from Da to be waiting for me. But this canoe not being there, Doalu took another, and accompanied me in it as far as Da. As the king of

Da is Doalu's nephew, I did not meet with any unpleasantness there on this occasion. Doalu at once engaged a good canoe for me and a man, to bring me down to the Sandbeach, without stopping on the way. Accordingly, I took leave of Doalu, and set out on my journey at ten o'clock, A.M.

All went well as far as Datia, and the refreshing sea-breezes to which I was now again exposed, strengthened me remarkably. We reached Datia at one o'clock, where we had to land a woman who had come with us from Da. When we approached the landing-place, a girl of about eighteen years of age came slowly towards us, uttering a mournful cry. She had no sooner come close to the canoe, than the woman joined in the cry in the most doleful manner; all this they did without shaking hands or speaking a word. So they went together to the town, both crying, that they could be heard a long way off. A common relative had been killed near Tuso in an engagement, and this was the cause of their grief. My canoe-man also went to the town, to drink water, as he said. But after I had waited for him near the canoe for a long time, he came back to tell me that he wanted to sleep in Datia that night, and to take me on the next day, when he thought the way would be less unsafe. I begged him to go on; I tried to encourage him, but all in vain; he was immovable. To spend the night in the cramped and filthy Datia would, I was afraid, bring on my fever again; and so I determined to proceed, if it were possible. I drew the canoe into the water, intending to leave alone with my servant; but the canoe-man brought it ashore again, and little Datia boys run away with the paddles. There I stood, in a burning sun, still weak from the fever, not knowing what to do. But soon I thought it to be the best to lay my case before the quiet old king. With the present of a shilling in my hand, I at once secured his help. He proposed to send another canoe-man with me, so that my own might have less reason to be afraid of the enemies. These troubles had lasted three full hours, so that we could not leave till after four o'clock, P. M. But the difficulties of that day were not yet

at an end. When we had come near the place where Tuso stood, my canoe-men saw a canoe a great distance off, at which they were so terror-struck, that they at once turned the canoe, and wanted to go back again to Datia with all possible speed. With kindness and firmness, I at last prevailed on them to stop till the canoe came somewhat nearer to us. Yet to secure themselves an easy escape into the bush, in case the distant canoe should prove an hostile one, they pulled our own canoe as close as possible to the shore. At six o'clock the canoe came so near, that they could discern men of their own party in it, which at once inspired them with courage. And after having heard from these men that the road was perfectly safe, they pulled on with energy, so that we arrived on the Sandbeach at eight o'clock in the evening. I was thankful to the Lord, that notwithstanding so much exposure to the sun, and anxiety, so soon after my fever, He yet kept me from a relapse of it.

Arrived on the Sandbeach, and slowly recovering, no doubt, on account of improper food and unhealthy water, I spent my time in making a translation of the two manuscripts I had brought with me from Bandakoro, with the assistance of some men who understood English. Not being likely, at Cape Mount, to meet with a passage to Sierra Leone, I embraced an opportunity to go down in a boat to Liberia. But even here I had to wait for seven weeks, viz., from March 23rd till May 11th, before I could gain my object. This time, however, was not unemployed. I at once set myself to work to get some acquaintance with languages spoken near the Republic of Liberia; viz., with the Dawoi, Gola or Gura, Basa, and Pase. While thus engaged, I was visited by a Vei youth, living in Monrovia, who had heard of me when I was in his country, and now wanted to see me. From him I got the important manuscript which once belonged to king Goturu, and the copying and translating of which took up all the time which two attacks of intermittent fever left me for work, out of those seven weeks.

Perhaps I may be permitted to state here, that, from all I could see, the Republic of Liberia is exercising a very beneficial,—a Christian influence over the surrounding African tribes, and trying, as much as is in her power, to assist in suppressing the foreign Slave-trade along the Western Coast of Africa. After a stay of seven weeks in this interesting and promising Negro Republic, I met with a pleasant and free passage in the Isabella, Captain Brown, chartered by a German merchant, and arrived, nearly recovered, in Freetown on the 16th of May, after an absence from the Colony of nearly four months. To the God of all mercy be praise and glory, that He has been with me on the journey, and has come back with me again to this place!

S. W. KOELLE.

Fourah Bay, in June 1849.

ALPHABET OF THE VEI WRITTEN LANGUAGE.
COMPILED BY Mr J. W. KOELLE.

A. , *a.*

B. *1* *or* *bā; 2* *or* *bă; 3* , *băng; 4* *băng; 5* *bau; 6* *(with an double form* *) bă; 7* 2 *bă; 8* *bá; 9* *or* *be; 10* *bĕ (written also* *) 11* , *or* *bĕ; 12* *bō; 13* *bō; 14* *bo; 15* *bŏ; 16* *or* *bŏ; 17* *bú; 18* *bu; 19* *bú (gun) 20* *bu; 21* *bu; 22* *Bĭlĕ, proper name.*

D. *1* *dă; 2* *or* *or* *or* *dă; 3* *dă; 4* *dăng; 5* *dang; 6* *dĕng; 7* *dĭ; 8* *dī; 9* *dō; 10* *dō; 11* *or* *dŏ; 12* *dō 13* *dŏng; 14* *dŏ; 15* *or* *or* *dshă; 16* *dshă; 17* *dshă; 18* *dshē; 19* *or* *dshĭ (meaning water) 20* *dshĭ, 21* *or* *dshŏ; 22* *dshŏ; 23* *or* *dshu; 24* *dshon (slave) 25* *dŭ; 26* *dŏng; 27* *dĭsh; 28* *dŭ; 29* *dŭng; 30* *dŭng.*

E. *1* *ĕ; 2* *ē.*

F. *1* *or* *fă; 2* *fă; 3* 5 *fa; 4* *or* *or* *fă; 5* *or* *fē; 6* *fĕng; 7* *fĭ; 8* *fo (o in note), 9* *fo (a in water) 10* *fo; 11* *fu.*

G. *1* *gā; 2* *gă; 3* *gă; 4* *gă; 5* *gă; 6* *gbă; 7* *gba; 8* *gbā; 9* *gbá; 10* *or* *gbā; 11* *or* *gbĕ; 12* *gbē; 13* *gbi; 14* *gbo; 15* *gbo; 16* *or* *or* *gbo (o-a in water) 17* *gbo (ö) 18* *gbong; 19* *gba,*

G, 20 or *gŏ*; 21 *gŏ* (o as in water) 22, *gu*.

H, 1 *ha*; 2 *ha*; 3 *hā*; 4 or *ha*; 5 *hā*; 6 *hē* (hear!) written also ; 7 *hē*; 8 or *hi*; 9, or *hn*; 10 *hn*.

I, *i*.

K, 1 *k*; 2 *ka*; 3 *ka*; 4 *kā*; 5 *kae*; 6 or *kă* (now obsolete id) 7 *kē*; 8 *keng*; 9, *ki*; 10, or *ko*; 11 or or *ko* (o as in water) 12, *ko* (id) 13, *kong*; 14 *kŭ*; 15 *kung*.

L, 1 or or *la* or *lră*. The sound so represented is not very clear; sometimes they read it *rä*, sometimes *lă* and sometimes (not unfrequently) it is the coalition of both, alike with the Sanscrit (*lre*) or (*lra*). 2, *la*; 3 *lē*; 4 or *lo* or *lro*; 5, *lo* (o as in water); 6 *lu*; 7, *lu*.

I must remark here on a certain sameness of signs of syllables beginning with *l*, *r*, and *d*, that this is not so much a neglect of orthography, as rather arising from a law of the language, according to which

the sounds l, r, d, are frequently interchanged.

M, 1 mă; 2 mā; 3 mă; 4 mi; 5 or mo; 6 mŭ; 7 (m before b and f. This consonantal sound and that of n is often so strongly pronounced as if it were accompanied by a deep vowel, and in such a case can even take the accent, just as m and n in the Krīē and Dăwoi languages.

N, 1 n (also); 2, I nă; 3 nă; 4 nde (the corresponding obsolete form is); 5 ndo; 6 ni; 7 or nī; 8 or or no; 9 no (o - a in water) 10 or nu; 11 or nū; 12 nyă; 13 nyĕ; 14 or nyi; 15 nyŏ.

O, or ō; expression of astonishment.

P, 1 or pā; 2, I pă; 3 pĕ; 4 pe; 5 pi; 6 po; 7 po.

R, 1 or rā; 2, II= ra; 3 ră; 4 re; 5 rō; 6 ro; 7 ru.

S., 1 or sa; 2 or sä; 3 se; 4 seng; 5 si; 5 so; 6 or so (o-a in water); 7 so; 8 su 9 or sung; 10 Sălĕ; 11 Sădĭyă, proper names.

T., 1 or tă; 2 or tä; 3 or tä; 4 or tĕ; 5 ti; 6 tiä; 7 ting; 8 or to; 9, tō (o-a in water); 10 or to (o-a in water, and nasalized) 11, or or tu (nasalized); 12 tu; 13 Tărŏ, proper name.

U., 1 u; 2 or w.

V 1 or vă; 2, va; 3 vŏ (o-a in water) 4 vi.

W, 1 wa; 2 wā (nasalized); 3 wä, 4 wĕ; 5, we; 6 we; 7, wi; 8 wi; 9 wo; 10 wo (o-a in water) 11 or wu; 12 wu.

Y., 1, or yā; 2, or ya; 3 yĕ; 4 ye.

Z., 1 zä; 2 or or ze; 3, zo (o-a in water) 4 zo.

NG (n) ng; 2 nga; 3 ngä; 4 nggĕ; 5 ngo; 6 nggō; 7 ng-gă.

The letters are written by the Natives with a reed pen, and are therefore of a rough form. As this copy of Mr. Koelle's manuscript cannot have the advantage of his own revisal, some errors may have been inadvertently made.

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